

## Island Stories by Lawrence Bailard

I am writing these stories in 2013. Jim asked me to put them down so that he can have a booklet on the boat for guests to read. I have come to Santa Cruz Island yearly since I was four and a half except for 1938 to 1945 inclusive and 1964 to 1976 after my father sold his boat. We camped from 1926 to 1937 when Ed Stanton bought most of the island and didn't allow landings or camping. We have not camped here since 1937.

It was only natural that I was brought to Santa Cruz Island since Dad dearly loved fish, fishing and camping. His mother had taken her children to Bay Webster's camp on Anacapa Island several times. I believe they also may have camped on Santa Cruz Island a time or two. I was only told of two incidents of the trips to Anacapa Island. First, Fanny Bailard used to get very seasick and on one crossing she was lying on the Webster skiff pulled up on the afterdeck. A large wave swept across the deck and nearly carried the skiff and Grandma overboard which terrified the children.

Second, they were also impressed by going by rowboat to get water from the west Anacapa Island spring. The only source of water on Anacapa Island group.. Webster's tent camp was itself on the middle part of the island.

When I first started camping on Santa Cruz Island we camped at Dick's Harbor. (Platt Harbor on the charts) Then we moved west to Ladies Harbor because it was nearer the better fishing. After several years we started camping at Valdez Harbor to be even nearer the fishing. We slept on the ground using a bedroll at first and later a sleeping bag – no air mattresses yet. We drank the water from the streams in spite of the sheep and the pigs and we never got sick. We did try to find a side spring. We cooked over an open fire and had camp fires but we were very careful about our fires. Later Dad bought a Coleman gasoline stove because wood was scarce and these stoves were recently available. Roy Pinkham had a Coleman lantern which also burned unleaded gas. Wood was always scarce but we managed with a little driftwood and dead limbs from oak trees which we gathered by throwing a light rope over them and hauling them down. We ate mostly dried or canned food and a good deal of fish. Canned milk was a must and the empty cans made great targets to shoot at when we threw them in the ocean. We used .22 rifles or slingshots. Almost everyone tried their aims at one period or the other. Boats at this time just dumped their garbage overboard so there were always Pet Milk cans for targets. Now it is different, the harbors are clean, and there is essentially no camping on Santa Cruz.

When I was a boy you could camp with a permit from the Caires and I have been coming to the "islands" for 87 years. How fortunate I have been. When I was young I would be so excited that I would sleep very little the night before we left. It was the most exciting event of the year, better than Christmas or even my

birthday. I still love to come over here although just looking and remembering is just about all I can do. It's wonderful!

When Dad was about twenty he went with a group to look for 2 fishermen who were lost at the Islands. As Dad said, unfortunately they found one body in very bad condition. He never went on a man hunt again. Mrs. Eaton told of this tragedy in her "Diary of a Sea Captain's Wife". Frank Nidever, a fisherman, was lost at Santa Cruz in a storm. A week later Big Jerry and a helper, Ike Newton went over to look for him and didn't return. They recovered Big Jerry's body near Potato Harbor. Nidever's body was never found.

In 1926 Dad and Mother took Margaret and me to Santa Cruz for my first camping trip to the Islands. We camped at Dick's with Nelson Smith, Jake Hales, Roy Pinkham, Chesley Pinkham, 2 Birss brothers, Lucien Higgins and others. We boarded the Sea Wolf at the S.B. Wharf about 6 a.m. Ira Eaton was the skipper. He landed us and all our gear at Dick's about 10 a.m. It was a long carry from the beach to the camp site. I wanted to help so they gave me an ax which I dragged up to camp. We camped there for 10 days or two weeks. Some days we would go out fishing in an outboard or Lucien's inboard. Several times Dad took me fishing from the rocks west of Dick's. I remember catching black perch and several sheephead. In the evening we would sit around a camp fire singing to Roy Pinkham's accordion. At night times I remember sleeping under the trees waking often because of the hard ground and listening to the multitude of frogs in the stream and occasionally foxes scurrying after mice I suppose. We would wake to the calls of the doves overhead.

On my second trip, Ira Eaton was late coming for us and Mother and Aunt Marion had to get back to teach school and Margaret was starting first grade so Dad took them down to Fry's where Merritt Chapman Scott Company was quarrying rock for the Santa Barbara breakwater. After some persuasion the skipper of the tug agreed to take the 3 of them back to Santa Barbara. It took the tug 5 ½ hours to pull the barge of rock to the partially completed breakwater. Several days later, the rest of us loaded all of our gear in Nelson Smith's round bottom outboard and headed for Pelican Bay. As we left Dick's Max Fleishman went past us in his large yacht. The ocean was dead calm but we only had about 3 inches of freeboard and I saw these large wavelets of the yacht's wake coming toward us; I was terrified. We had no problem but I still have a mental picture of that wake. We reached Pelican Bay where we found Eaton and so to home. This arrangement all in all was every unreliable.

Lucien was not only a fine mechanic but was inventive also. Mice were always a big problem at our camp. One time at Dick's we were overrun with them to the extent that they invaded our food storage and ran across our beds at night. Lucien devised two traps using empty square 5 gallon oil cans. The first trap he made by tying a double sheet of the Saturday Evening Post over the top and then slitting the paper from each corner to the center. He then rubbed smelly

cheese on each point . The mice were attracted to the center and fell into the 3-4 inches of water he had put in the can. This model worked reasonably well but the other was the prize. He made a little teeter-totter which rested on the top of the can and fastened a bit of cheese on the end which overhung the water in the can; the other end rested on the edge of the can. A ramp up to this end completed the trap. When a mouse would venture out for the cheese he would overbalance the teeter-totter and be dropped into the water. This device really cut the number of mice.

Another time at Dick's Lucien decided to go fishing with dynamite. In his shop at home he had prepared several bombs. The bombs were made of a quarter stick of dynamite weighted with a sinker. He attached a fuse and detonator and tried to make it waterproof with lots of electrical tape. Dad and I accompanied him in the skiff over to the heavy kelp bed near Mussel Rock. Only two of the four went off and the total number of fish stunned was two. I was happy that none went off in the boat. It is odd that he would fool with dynamite since an older brother had been killed when some exploded unexpectedly. It is also odd that Dad would go along and take me.

Dad and Roy and several others were camped at Ladies Harbor one year and we expected Lucien Higgins to come over in his new boat. We had watched its construction at his machine shop on the Higgins ranch. I was fascinated to see him build the framework and steam the redwood planks and fasten them on. In fact even though I was only 10 or 11 I helped his son screw on some butt blocks to join the ends of the planks. It was 26 feet long and a Maine dory type. He put an old Model T engine in it using the planetary transmission as a reverse gear. He finally arrived at Ladies Harbor and we learned that he had launched it by taking it by trailer out on the Continental Oil Company pier about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile east of present Chevron Pier in Carpinteria and then had it lowered into the water at high tide by a steam shovel used to dig out asphalt at the tar pits. On the way over a bearing in the engine had burned out and he limped into Ladies Harbor. The next day we took the skiff down to Fry's where Lucien borrowed a blow torch and some babbitt metal to pour a new bearing. This he did, taking the engine apart and putting it back together in the boat. It worked just fine afterward for several years.

In 1932 Fran Wymond, a friend of my parents, formed an organization called the Carpinteria Girl Mariners. Mother was first mate of the Girl Mariners. The Mariners camped at Ladies two times and Dad sort of managed the camping and cooking. He built a camp table and dug a latrine. On one occasion the SB Sea Scouts were camped at Valdez and came over for breakfast. Dad fried eggs for 35 people on a cast iron griddle over a wood fire. Frank Wymond, Jr., James Hendy and I got to tag along. Dad, Frank Wymond Sr. and Roy Pinkham were the men who helped Fran Wymond, Mother and second mate Phyllis Dane. The Mariners came over on a large schooner owned by the DeMotts, friends of the

Wymonds. We men rode on Irwin Stevens' (Steve) boat the Ruby A (later the CH). All the food and gear came on it. Steve stayed there the whole week and ran excursions for the group. The girls hiked, swam, and did Mariner activities. In the evening we would sit around a large camp fire and Roy P would play his accordion and all would sing. Frank W Sr. would tell ghost stories which were particularly good and then the girls would climb up fearfully and with much trepidation up to their sleeping place in the cave on the west side of the canyon.

One day Frank Jr, James, and I went hiking on the mesa west of Ladies and noticed 3 or 5 sparrow hawks (kestrels) fighting. They would soar to a great height, then drop like bullets onto one another with one giving a high pitched scream. One bird was even killed. It evidently was a territorial battle. On this same hike we saw a huge pig lying down, there were no trees around so we made a long detour. It was only when we got downwind that we realized that it was dead! Some hunter had shot the large boar and removed the tusks. Frank Jr. decided to hike to the top of Diablo Peak but James and I took another route back. This route led us down a small canyon which lies halfway between Ladies and Valdez. It is narrow and has water. The tiny beach we reached is hardly visible from the boat. We were sure it would make a great hideaway. From there we worked our way east over a small ridge to the ocean edge at the end of the rock strewn beach inside of Arch Rock. Among some large rocks we noticed a good sized boat engine similar to the three-cylindere "Frisco Standard" engine that was in Dad's boat "The Spray." I believe this engine was from Capt. Eaton's boat "Irene" as it was lost in this area. See more of this account in the book, "A Ship Captain's Wife."

Most other years Dad and Roy Pinkham would camp for a week or 10 days with various other men including Lucien Higgins, Pat Catlin, Fred and George Greenough and Frank Wymond to name a few regulars. Later on when Joe Hendy had his Monterey fishing boat conversion, James Hendy, his cousin John Bailey and Frank Wymond would go. I always got to go along. Roy had an outboard motor and Dad had a skiff which we would take fishing most mornings. We would troll west along the kelp catching bass with the occasional bonita or barracuda. Sometimes we would stop at another harbor to explore ashore. Once we walked up the canyon at Hazards and saw where fishermen had chopped bark off the oaks to boil their nets to preserve them in the tannic acid. It didn't kill the trees and the trees recovered. There were a number of eagle's nests high on the cliff where we would look for the birds. I always carried a sling shot to harass the many seabirds, seals, and sea lions, although I usually missed. When the west wind came up we would turn and head back but often we would go as far as Painted Cave and even the West End. On windy days we would stay on shore and swim, hike, shoot at tin cans with a .22 or sling shot or fish from the rocks. To vary the routine we would get up early and gather black abalone from the rocks east of Dick's or from the rocks on the beach at Arch Rock. Early in the morning on smooth days when there wasn't even a ripple so we could see bottom, we might try to spear bat rays either East of Dicks or at

Hazards. We spent many hours in the afternoon skipping rocks at the beach or throwing rocks at canned milk cans to sink them.

I will tell you of a few odd incidents which happened. One time at Valdez a school of mackerel drove a large school of anchovies up on the cobbled beach. The stranded anchovies formed a silvery band about 5 feet wide. We gathered up some and Dad fixed them for supper. John Young even shot a mackerel with a .22. One windy day when we couldn't go fishing we boys were lying on the beach talking when a sudden gust of wind came and turned our large skiff up on edge near us even though this was a very heavy redwood skiff! On a different trip Steve dropped Dad, someone else and me off at Frazier's Cove and we walked up to the top of the cliff at the west end, then down along the north cliffs to Hazards where we had left a skiff to row back to camp at Valdez. This was quite a hike because the small canyons above the cliffs are much larger than they appear. This hike was nothing compared to one Dad made with some companions when he was 16 or 17 years old. They were camped at Dicks. Leaving there early in the morning they hiked as far east as Prisoners, then up the canyon to the central valley, on West and over the south range to the beach at the Willows where they were met by the boat. I think it was the same trip that Bay Webster picked them up and they went on around the West End. When they arrived off Forney's Cove the sea between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa was terribly rough and Webster was concerned about breaking waves. These they used to call blind breakers. He ran in next to the heavy kelp and got around safely. We went around there in the opposite direction with Steve once. You could look back at the swells and they towered over the boat but fortunately didn't break. Steve also stayed right next to the kelp. The kelp is much lighter now so I don't know what you would do.

Dad made several trips with Steve Irwin Stevens to help him out and also he was always game to go over there. Once Dad and Joe Schwizer went over with him to get abalone to bait crawfish traps. This was during the Depression. Steve had been doing ranch work and the boat deck had dried out. They left Summerland in the late afternoon and a strong west wind was blowing. Spray poured on the cabin and deck which leaked a lot. Dad was lying down in a bunk forward of the engine and periodically he would have to pump the bilge to keep the fly wheel from picking up water and spraying it on the engine. As it was, the leaks in the cabin were dripping all over the engine. The engine had 2 cylinders; one stopped firing near the middle of the channel. They were limping along on 1 cylinder; it stopped just outside of Pelican Bay. Fortunately it was shallow enough that when they dropped the anchor it caught and held. They rode there over night in gradually diminishing winds until morning. To start the engine then Steve dried the big spark coil over the stove. Those make and break engines had no condensers. They were finally able to start the engine and since the wind and the sea had died down they went up to the west end and Frazers cove where they gathered 30-35 burlap sacks of black abalone. They spent the night at Forney's and came back to Summerland where Steve kept his boat. Steve hid

the abalones in a receiver, a large slotted box weighted to sink to the bottom, buoyed with a small inconspicuous float.

On another occasion Steve's deckhand wanted a week off during swordfish season so Dad volunteered to help him. They fished out of Smugglers, leaving in the morning when the light was good and scoured the area to the South. Dad would run the boat while Steve sat on a little crosstree up the mast. Whenever a swordfish was spotted Steve would hurry down and out on the long plank projecting from the bow to a small pulpit. Dad would try to put Steve within striking distance of the fish. The long-handled spear had a dart on the end which would detach if a fish was struck. There was about 500' of  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch line fastened to the dart which had a good sized float on the other end. The float had a pole with a flag on it so they could follow the fish. After the fish tired Steve would pick up the float in a skiff and pull the swordfish up where he would kill it with a lance if necessary. Often they were dead. As soon as they were hoisted aboard the large boat, Steve would saw the sword off to prevent injury in case the fish suddenly revived. In the week they were out they speared 8 nice fish which were worth \$25-\$40 each, about 10 cents a pound. This was during the Depression when a dollar was worth many times what it is today. When Dad got home he smelled so much like on old dead fish mother made him take his clothes off outside and shower immediately.

Another time Dad made a trip with Steve; I don't know what the reason for the trip was. They were anchored in Ladies and noticed a great many smelt over in Babies harbor next door. Steve had a length of net which they stretched across the harbor and caught 500 pounds of smelt which Steve sold for a few cents a pound in Santa Barbara.

A couple of other stories about Steve might be of interest here. One time he hauled two people from SB Museum out to San Miguel. One was Mr. Hoffman, a botanist, the other David B Rogers, an anthropologist. Hoffman was climbing on a sheer cliff and fell. It killed him. When he didn't return to the beach they started searching and found his body. They rolled it up in a canvas and laid it out on deck. Steve told us how Rogers proceeded to sit down next to the corpse and calmly eat his lunch. Steve was a hardy old salt but this was too much for him. Another time, Steve was crossing between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa and spotted a dingy adrift. He picked it up. It was a beautiful Old Town sailing dingy about 14 feet long complete with all gear including sails. He sold it to Joe Hendy for \$40. Another time Steve came upon a purse seiner on fire. The crew had abandoned it and rowed ashore. All of the boat was ablaze except the foredeck. He crawled aboard from his skiff, disconnected the large anchor, loaded it in his skiff. The salvage effort was worth \$35-\$40.

To get back to our tales of the Islands, once we were loading our gear on Steve's boat at an oil pier off Summerland. Steve had pulled the boat in close to a small landing stage on the pier to put stuff aboard. Roy P started to step aboard

carrying his outboard when the boat swung away on a small swell. Roy fell in and went to the bottom before he let go. We grappled for the engine and finally fished it out. We were leaving for the Islands the next day so Roy took the engine home and dismantled it. He dried the coil and condenser and put it together before morning. After we arrived at Ladies we couldn't start it so Steve took us down to Fry's where Merritt Chapman Scott Company maintained a watchman at the quarry. There was a shop there and the watchman happened too have some salvaged outboard parts. Believe it or not he had a coil and condenser that would fit and he soon had the engine running fine. Dad gave him a \$20 bill and I was impressed. This was a week's wages during the Depression, but as Dad told me we wouldn't have had much of a trip with no engine. While the man worked on the engine I carefully studied a model of a rum runner the man had made of one he had crewed on during Prohibition. It was a beautiful boat about 30 inches long with a wind up phonograph motor for power. He was quite proud of it and he told us a few of his experiences while rum running.

On a later trip we were out trolling for bonita off of Arch Rock when the fishing boat which had brought us over to Ladies came by. The skipper was Joe Bermudez. He asked us if we would like to go out on a reef and help him fish for rock cod. The George Bliss Sr. Family had made previous arrangements for him to come over that day from SB and take them clear around the Island. They were camped at Valdez. When he had arrived to pick them up and give them a ride around the island, they had decided not to go so he decided to spend some time fishing before returning to SB. He said they will have to pay me but I might as well make a few extra dollars. We fished with heavy lines using window weights for sinkers. We helped him for a couple of hours catching several fish boxes full. He expected to get about 5 cents a pound for them. Not much, but remember a day's wage during the Depression were \$3 at that time.

When we camped on the island, yellow jackets were a real problem at meal time. We learned to leave 1 inch of syrup in the bottom of canned fruit cans. The yellow jackets would crawl down in the can, get covered with syrup and be trapped. Over a week or two, they would be noticeably thinned out. One time we suffered from them another way. A windy afternoon we hiked up a ridge East of Valdez to roll rocks. We found a great one to roll but could just budge it so we laid down on our back to push it with our feet. Eureka! Down it went but we uncovered a yellow jacket nest! We didn't get to stand and watch our rock roll.

The first year Dad had his boat the "Spray" the four of us in our family were anchored in Pelican when we noticed a swarm of birds feeding at the west point of the harbor. Marg and I rowed out in the dingy and trolled for kelp bass. I rowed and she held the line. The bass were driving a school of anchovies up to the top. We caught several nice bass but what was more interesting was that a pair of eagles were catching bass which were right at the surface. I still have a very vivid picture of this and what puzzles me is that I remember them as golden

eagles. I have since discovered that juvenile bald eagles resemble golden eagles. I feel that I would have remembered the white head etc. of bald eagles.

I do know that we saw many nests on the cliffs and that the eagles killed many small lambs. In fact, Marcus Cravens was deputy Agricultural Commissioner and he was called over to Santa Cruz Island by Ed Stanton because of the problem. They poisoned the eagles which were gone before the advent of DDT. They tried to eliminate the pigs with the introduction of Hog Cholera and they tried to control the prickly pear cactus with some sort of insect. Neither of these last two worked.

Marcus had an interesting experience at San Miguel Island. He was just out of school when he got a job with a movie company making scenes there. They were making a scene for "Mutiny on the Bounty." They were shooting the scene of the sinking of the Pandora. A section of deck and the "Pandora's Box" were built on a barge which they intended to partially sink. The wind and the sea came up and they really did have a sinking. Marcus was able to shed his clothes and shoes and swim to a nearby boat but one or two people were lost. He said it was a near thing with him.

Dad and I went to Santa Cruz several times with Pat Catlin in the Jenny M. It was a duplicate of Lucien's boat who built it. Once there were 6 of us on board, and we intended to camp. We were crossing accompanying Joe Hendy's in his boat. About half way across we looked back and could see them way behind and they were waving frantically. Their engine had broken. The boat was a 28 foot Monterey with a single cylinder Hick's engine. We towed them slowly back to Santa Barbara, then set out again deciding to go around to the south side. We pulled into Coches Prietos in the late afternoon and went ashore to camp. Jalmar Englund and his wife lived in a small shack there while he was fishing crawfish. We presented them with a dozen or so ears of fresh corn thinking it was a great treat. They thanked us but without great enthusiasm. We found out why when we saw their beautiful garden behind the house. They had their own corn every bit as good as ours and a bit better as theirs had no worms. We wondered about their worms the next year. Jalmar was one of several fishermen who lived in shacks on Santa Cruz and fished crawfish from skiffs. I believe he told us he was tending 80 traps, pulling them daily. He removed the crawfish and rebaited them with fish he also had to catch. The "bugs" were kept in receivers and a fishing boat would come once a week and haul them to Santa Barbara.

That trip we went on around the island clockwise and I remember up near the west end on the north side we saw a sheep caught on a shelf high up. The sheep would jump down places that they couldn't jump back up. We had noticed the particular sheep on an earlier trip over during spring vacation and here it was the last of August just before school started. The animal had eaten all the vegetation and had no water so Dad shot it with my 22. It was not uncommon for sheep to get themselves in that predicament.



When Dad was a young man he went over to Santa Rosa to hunt geese. Geese landed in the lagoon near the south point. The hunters would sneak ashore and shoot a few birds and hope to retrieve them before riders from the ranch could get there and catch them. I don't think they shot very many birds. Later during World War II he had the opportunity to hunt over there legitimately. The Navy had taken over the SR Island boat for use in the Pacific, so they would transport the island cattle to Ventura in barges. They would unload them on the beach near the mouth of the Ventura River and the cattle were held in Buddy Woods feed lot until shipment. As a return favor Ed Vail would invite Buddy to come with a couple of friends to hunt deer and elk. Dad went over with Buddy several times and was able to keep a freezer locker pretty well filled with venison. It really helped out since meat was strictly rationed. After the war he did his best to get invited over having become quite friendly with Al and Russ Vail, but no luck.

An incident happened on a trip Dad made to San Miguel on the "San Simeon." Bob Brooks hired this boat to haul supplies out and wool back. This boat was owned by Joe Castagnola with Jimmy Brooks. They had landed their load and Dad went looking for Indian relics. He found a beautiful bone knife about 1 foot long which he stuck in the hip pocket of his jeans. When he arrived back at the beach the wind and waves had come up and it was a rush to launch the skiff. In the confusion of pushing the boat into the surf the knife fell out and he lost it. He was heart broken. Dad made an earlier trip to San Miguel with the Carpinteria Sea Scouts to camp. Their boat was an open 26 foot whale life-boat. It was cold and windy there as it usually is. So they headed on down to Ladies at Santa Cruz. The following day most of the boys hiked to the top of Mount Diablo. They arrived there after a hard climb. Several boys saw the peak a few miles west which they thought might be higher so they set out for it, the others returned to camp and reported. The group that went west were caught by dusk descending and spent the night hungry and cold at Valdez. They were picked up the next day at Valdez by boat. Neil was not happy.

We were camped at Ladies once with the usual group however John Bowen was along; he was about 18-19 years old. He went hunting for pigs and succeeded in bringing back a small one. A young boy from the city was with us. The son of a friend of Pat Catlin's John was skinning it and the kid wanted to know where the bacon came from. Dad was cooking near by and heard the question so he hid a slice of bacon in his hand and taking a knife reached inside and with a deft maneuver pulled out a nice slice of bacon. The boy was quite impressed. His father was sort of a character and was the butt of much kidding. When we were packing up to come home Roy hid a dead fish in the fellow's bed roll. I'm sure father and son remembered their trip to Santa Cruz Island.

Another time we went to Ladies on the Hendy's boat. When we anchored we noticed a long camp table made of 1x12's. James determined that it was made of clear oak boards. We found evidence ashore that a movie group had been

filming there. I suppose someone got a kickback on the supplies. James dismantled the table and took the boards home to his father, Joe. Joe later made a beautiful carved oak chest of them. A year or so later I saw a movie, *The Count of Monte Christo*, and recognized the scene of finding a treasure which they had filmed in the deep cave just to the West of the anchorage. So much for the island stories.

I suppose Captain Eaton sort of regulated our choice of harbors. I don't remember ever having to share a harbor camp with another group although there was often another boat anchored in the harbor with people staying aboard. From 1929 to 1937 because of the Depression there weren't many boats. We wouldn't see another one for several days. The boats we did see were mostly fishing boats. Of course now there are many boats but much fewer fish to be caught. Once abalone were abundant and easily harvested. Now it is rare to see one. During the years we camped here I remember only seeing one small whale swim by as we were fishing off the reef of Orizaba. Now we see many whales of different kinds. In years past we would occasionally see dolphins but if we saw as many as a dozen it was a lot. Now there are hundreds. Santa Cruz Island itself has changed. The sheep and pigs have been removed and the vegetation is returning. Our old campsites are overgrown. Floods caused by overgrazing have washed where we cooked and made our beds. But never mind, it is still a wonderful place.